California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

Harry P. Pachon

President, Tomás Rivera Policy Institute
Kenan Professor of Political Studies, Claremont Colleges
Former Executive Director, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Education Fund (1983-1993)

June 18, July 14, July 23, and November 25, 1997
Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, Claremont

by Charles C. Turner
Claremont Graduate University

LATINO POLITICS

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

Oral History Program
History Department
California State University, Fullerton

Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento

Oral History Program
Claremont Graduate School

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The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

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University of California, Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens, and leaders.

John F. Burns
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer:

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Interview Time and Place:

June 18, 1997
Afternoon Session of 3/4 hours

July 14, 1997
Morning Session of 1 hour

July 23, 1997
Morning Session of 1 hour

November 25, 1997
Morning Session of 1/2 hour

All interviews took place in Dr. Pachon's office at the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute in Claremont, California.

Editing:
The interviewer/editor checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings and verified proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed.

The edited transcripts were forwarded to Dr. Pachon, who made only minor emendations and returned the approved manuscripts in December 1997.

The interviewer/editor prepared the introductory materials.

Papers
There were no private papers consulted.

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the Oral History Program Office, Claremont Graduate University, along with the records relating to the interview. Master tapes are deposited in the California State Archives.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Harry P. Pachon was born in Miami, Florida on June 4, 1945. After moving to Montebello, California as a teen, Dr. Pachon attended California State University at Los Angeles, where he received a B.A. and M.A. in political science. Dr. Pachon completed his Ph.D. in government at the Claremont Graduate School in 1973. After teaching at Loyola University and Michigan State University, Dr. Pachon moved to Washington, D.C. in 1977. From 1977 to 1981 Dr. Pachon served as an Associate Staff Member for the House Appropriations Committee and as Administrative Assistant to Congressman Edward R. Roybal. In 1981 Dr. Pachon returned to academia as Associate Professor of Political Studies at City University of New York. That same year he became Chairman and a founding Board member of the NALEO [National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials] Education Fund. Since 1987, Dr. Pachon has been Kenan Professor of Political Studies at the Claremont Colleges. Since 1993 he has served as President of the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute in Claremont, California.

[Session 1, June 18, 1997]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

TURNER: I'd like to get started with some family background and early years questions to place things in context. First of all, you were born in 1945; where was that and where did you grow up?

PACHON: In Miami, Florida. And I grew up--the first sixteen years of my life I spent in Miami. We would make occasional trips, annual trips as it were, to Colombia when I was growing up.

TURNER: I know that your parents were both born in Colombia. When did they move to the United States? Did they move directly to Miami?

PACHON: No, they came twice, as a matter of fact. They came in the 1920s--when my two brothers were born, in New York City--in the 1920s and early 1930s. Then the depression hit and my father decided to move back to Colombia because of the depression. So they went back to Colombia, and

then they came back out in 1944. And I was born in 1945.

TURNER: So, they really had quite an extensive experience in the United States before you were born.

PACHON: Yes, they had lived in New York and, in fact, I think they spent some time in Chicago too. He worked both in New York as well as Chicago, in the late 20s, early 30s.

TURNER: What were his occupations?

PACHON: You know, I don't know what his occupations were when he first came to the United States. But I do know that on the second trip he was an accountant and he worked for Pan-American Airlines. He had extensive experience with the airlines. He worked for the national Colombian airline called Avianca, which was a real early developing airline because Colombia is divided in half by the Andes, so air travel developed early to get from one side to the other. They developed their national airline quicker--back in the 20s and 30s and 40s--than other countries because of the difficulty in transportation. So, he came over and started working for Pan-American and he retired from Pan-American.

TURNER: And that was--working for Pan-American--that was in Miami the whole time?

PACHON: In Miami, but he was a traveling auditor. From what I picked up, he would go to different places and audit the operations for the airline in different cities throughout all of Latin America. He spent some extended period of time in Peru. He was in every country in Latin America.

TURNER: A lot of traveling experience. You mentioned that you traveled to Colombia a couple of times when you were growing up, what did you learn from traveling there and other traveling you might have had as a young person?

PACHON: Well, I think when you're young you don't reflect on it; you simply accept it. I think it helped my Spanish, since I was being thrust into all-Spanish environments. I think what I did learn was the difference in educational systems between South America and the United States. I spent a year in Colombia in the third grade and I had done pretty well--I was an average student--in elementary school. And I was put in a Colombian school--and it was a private school--and I was at the tail end of the class because the pedagogical methods are quite different. Then I came back to the United States in fourth grade and I was at the top of my class. So, it was a tremendous ambivalence, where I actually stood.

TURNER: They were looking for different things from you?

PACHON: Yes, they were much more advanced in arithmetic --in math type operations--than American schools were. But remember, schools in South America are for the middle class or upper class, so if you can afford to go to school, you're going to get, comparatively speaking, in your elementary and secondary education, a much more intensive education. The problem is that masses of people don't get the education.

TURNER: Living in Miami, and having this background, and being bilingual from a very early age, was Spanish or English spoken in the home, or were they both spoken?

PACHON: No. It was Spanish exclusively in the home. In fact, I started school learning one word of English--I think it was toilet. And another curious experience happened to me when I first started school. I was put in a mentally retarded class, because I couldn't speak English. And I remember having to go home, and telling my mother, and my mother because my father wasn't there, the kids in that class are not like the kids in the neighborhood. I mean, they're totally different. And after two or three weeks they took me out. They took me out because my

parents protested. Again, it was Spanish monolingual, and then layering English on top of it.

TURNER: Was it the case that in the school district they didn't really know what to do with someone who didn't speak English?

PACHON: Oh, I think so. I think this was common throughout the Southwest and the Southeast, that they would put you in the "slow" classes, as it were. And I also remember a real curious thing. Starting first grade--I didn't go to kindergarten--when my parents were going to enroll me in the elementary school, and there was a black family ahead of us. They were claiming that they were Puerto Rican. And the school said, no, you're not Puerto Rican. You can't even speak Spanish. And they said, oh, no, we're Puerto Rican. No, no you're not. You have to go to the black school. So they took the black family that was ahead of me, trying to enroll their child, and they rejected them because they were black. And that was just filed away in me as an experience: why did they do that?

TURNER: That's got to be something almost incomprehensible at that age, what's going on.

PACHON: Yes, what's going on? Well, the only thing you feel is a relief: my goodness, I'm glad I'm not like them, that they've accepted me.

TURNER: I know there's a large Cuban population in Miami and in Florida. In the 40s and 50s, were there many Latinos, or did you feel that you were mostly in a majority Anglo situation?

PACHON: You know, it was funny. In Miami it was a totally heterogeneous situation. It was not only Anglo, but it was a whole mix of Latin American countries. The Miami I grew up in--remember, this is the 50s, 40s, and early 60s--was a Miami where the Puerto Ricans were the largest minority group, and the Cubans were not the largest minority. So, I can remember...

[Interruption]

PACHON: ...that we had a Panamanian child living a block away, Cubans across the street, Puerto Ricans, and then Anglos throughout. So it was a total mix of culture--Pan-American culture, as it were --as well as an all-American culture.

TURNER: So, a lot of diversity and exposure to many different cultures from an early age?

PACHON: Oh, yes.

TURNER: Did you have brothers and sisters?

PACHON: They were older than I was. Remember, I told you they were born in the late 20s and early 30s and I was born in 1945. The age gap between my brothers and myself is sixteen and eighteen years. They had a rough time in Miami, because they came over as teenagers. They literally had to fight their way into acceptance, because of their age. My older brother, especially, had fights with some of the guys, because he was a Latino. I guess the neighborhood, now that I look back at it, the neighborhood must have been going through a transition from an all Anglo neighborhood to a mixed Anglo-Latino neighborhood.

TURNER: So, then by the time you reached that age the transition had started to take place and you had a less difficult time?

PACHON: Yes. There was never any question. Except, sometimes there were issues at school where there was a feeling of being the other, of being the outsider, in so far as if you were a Latino. But not in the neighborhood.

TURNER: You mentioned the issue you had enrolling for school that day, what other early memories of significant political events--or things you now see as political--do you recall from that period?

PACHON: Yes, I can remember the African-American struggle with civil rights. I can remember trying to drink "colored" water out of a fountain and a woman rushing up to me saying, "oh, don't ever drink that." And she picked me up--I must have been about nine--and she picked me up and took me to the higher water fountain. Because they had the African-American--what they called "colored" --only African-Americans could drink out of, and the other drinking fountain, for "whites," was higher. So, of course, if you're a kid you go to the lower water fountain. She picked me up and she said never drink there. She had to hoist me up, get me to the top of the water fountain so I could drink water from the "white."

Another example is that I was on the bus and --this was before Rosa Parks--an elderly African-American woman got on the bus and she had two shopping bags and she sat on the front of the bus. And the bus driver stopped the bus. He said, I am not moving this bus until you sit in the back. And, you know, she was an older lady and everything. It struck me as unfair then, that they were making this older lady move to the back of the bus simply because she was African-American. So those are early memories.

Some other significant memories of that time in Miami, I remember silly things. You know, these are silly little things. The phys ed [physical education] teacher, every Friday would have mixed dance, with boys and girls. And the person who was dressed the best would get a free pass to the dance. So there was a set of, oh, it must have been about 20 percent of the class was Latino, and the rest were Anglo. We had some really spiffy Latino characters in that class. They would dress up in sports coats and things like that, tie, shirt, and the Latinos would never win, never win. And then one day--and these were not the "A" students, let me put it that way, these were more like the--not the "A" students--and they said, "The reason we're not winning is because we are the screw-offs and we are the people who are always getting into disciplinary problems. What we will do is, we'll look for Harry--who gets good grades--and we'll dress him up." So I remember--I guess this must have been eighth grade--a Cuban kid giving me his tie, a Puerto Rican kid giving me his sports coat, I had my nice pair of slacks, and someone else giving me shiny shoes. And I put everything on and I must have looked like a clown, because I

had all of these mixed clothes. And the gym teacher looked at us and, sure enough, he bypassed me and he picked somebody else. And then, the lesson learned for everybody was, it doesn't matter if you're a good student or not a good student, it doesn't matter how we dress, we're never going to get this. But it wasn't traumatic. It was like an event that you follow and you go "wow."

TURNER: Probably something that you can't make sense of at the time, but that sticks with you.

PACHON: Yeah, it does. And also, the feeling of Pan-Hispanic commonness. It wasn't just Cubans or Colombians or Puerto Rican kids, it was all the Hispanic surnamed or Latino kids. All the guys were together and they were all saying, this is the way we win. We get the "A" student and we put the tie on him.

TURNER: So this concept of la raza, as it later develops into a specifically political group, this was something that, in a more general sense, that you experienced at an early age.

PACHON: Yeah, but la raza has a connotation now that is primarily associated with the Southwest. And that wasn't the case in Miami, in the Southeast. It was more of a sense of Latino-ness: we are

the same but we were different. It didn't have the racial connotations. The closest I can come to it is thinking of folks who are different generation Italians. They are Italian-Americans, but they share culture rather than racial characteristics.

TURNER: So, a unity, but something different from the specifically Mexican-American experience.

PACHON: Yes, because when you use the term la raza, that has certain connotations.

TURNER: You've had a directly related to academics career for most of your entire life. Did you have influential teachers at a young age who then encouraged you in the direction of schooling and education?

PACHON: Yes, my family. I grew up, fortunately, in a household with two brothers, my two older brothers. I grew up surrounded by books. Although my father had a high school education and my mother had a first-grade education, my mother was a voracious reader, using the cliché. My father was--for somebody from Colombia--educated; a high school degree was an advanced degree at that time. And my two brothers in the university, so there was always an instillation in me that education was something very important

and that reading was very important. And discussing politics was common in our household. About the earliest memories I can remember about politics is the war in Korea and my two brothers discussing was it right for us to be in Korea? What were we doing fighting the Koreans? And talking about the ramifications of that.

When Fidel Castro was fighting--see, in Miami it's kind of interesting. I grew up listening to Radio Havana, because Miami's only like 125 miles away from Havana. So the powerful stations in Havana would broadcast directly into Miami. Just like you can pick up a Tijuana station here in Southern California. I would remember traffic reports from Havana. So, you discussed what was going on in Cuba. Even though we were Colombian we would talk about, oh my gosh, there's the liberator...

[Interruption]

PACHON: I'm sorry, where were we?

TURNER: We were talking about Havana.

PACHON: And the political education. So, it was a topic of evening conversation for us, of dinner conversation, in the front yard, with neighbors: oh, my God, that terrible [Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar] Batista--the dictator of Cuba--look

what horrible things he's done. So, it was a very politically aware environment as well as a very intellectual environment, in the presence of folks who were going to college.

TURNER: So, that was your brothers?

PACHON: My two brothers. And my mother being the reader she was. I can always remember her reading magazines and things like that.

TURNER: Were family members politically active in the sense of belonging to political organizations?

PACHON: None whatsoever. In fact, I'm the one that's the most politically involved in my family. My cousin was very ideological, progressively oriented, so he was always coming up with what at that time were crazy, outlandish ideas that would spark all sorts of discussion in the family, because he would espouse a real leftist position. So there was this kind of total milieu of political conversations that would go on.

TURNER: So then, would you say it was those discussions with the family that really got you interested in politics and led to your study of politics?

PACHON: Yes, I think so. Even in high school I can remember I wanted to be a community college instructor, or a teacher, something like that, in civics or in government. It was never anything

different. I never wanted to do anything else, besides concentrate in politics and government.

TURNER: At sixteen is when you moved from Miami?

PACHON: Yes. Pan-American Airways consolidated its headquarters--its Latin American operations--from Miami to New York City. And my family had to move to New York. They were very worried about the school environment in New York City--this is 1961--like West Side Story gangs and things like that. So they were saying, "Jeez, where we live in New York, can we give him a quality education?" So I moved out to California with my brother. I left home when I was sixteen.

TURNER: And moved in with your brother?

PACHON: With my brother, yes, my older brother. I came out here for two reasons. One is that they were obviously looking to avoid the worst for me. But it was also an economic function. My sister-in-law--his wife--was working, so they needed somebody to baby-sit for the kids. So I came out with a full understanding that I would baby-sit between four and eleven for my niece and nephew for room and board. Well, not room and board because my folks helped out--sent some money to them--for the two years I was in high school.

TURNER: Where specifically did you live?

PACHON: Montebello. We moved there June 22, 1961.

TURNER: That's a strong memory?

PACHON: Oh, yes. Imagine going, right in the middle of high school, where you've grown up from first to tenth grade, dealing with the people in junior high, and then getting uprooted in the middle and ending your sophomore year in a totally different environment, a totally different state. It was a very positive experience in retrospect.

TURNER: Did you go to New York in between, or just straight to California?

PACHON: Straight to California. I had visited New York before, so I knew what New York was like. So, it was just one of those things that occurred. I have to give credit to my folks for worrying about my education and making what for them must have been a sacrifice, saying, go with your brother.

TURNER: So, the last two years of high school you finished in Montebello?

PACHON: In Montebello, yes. And talk about transition. Remember I mentioned I was in a heterogeneous Latin American environment? And then I got thrown into an all Mexican American environment. I was shocked in some ways, because the discrimination that Mexican American students

were facing--having internalized feelings of being discriminated against and feeling inferior --was quite different than a Cuban, Pan-American experience.

TURNER: Do you feel like it was a much worse condition?

PACHON: It's interesting, because you always see things in terms of your own universe. I was puzzled. Remember in high school how they have honors classes? Well, I got placed into a couple of honors classes, and I was the only Latino student in those honors classes. I couldn't figure out what was going on, why I was the only Hispanic student who was in those particular classes. Again, I would go home--like I'd gone home when I was in the first grade--and say, I can't understand this. I would tell my brother and sister-in-law, you know what? There's hardly any Mexican American kids in these classes.

TURNER: You knew something wasn't right, but...

PACHON: Yeah, you pick up--you hear--discriminatory statements, but you don't identify them as such at that age, especially in the 60s.

TURNER: Did you feel like, as a Colombian-American, that you were accepted by Mexican Americans?

PACHON: Definitely. In fact, it was very touching. You come into a school, a new environment, and one of

the first groups that accepted me was the Mexican American students. But then I also had my other network of friends who were non-Mexican American, who were either in honors classes themselves and we shared some common experience, or who were also transitioning from different environments. My best friend came in from Kansas, started school the same day I did, had moved out from his folks' and moved in with his brother, so we started talking. And those were my friendship circles.

TURNER: So, you had, actually, several groups of friends?

PACHON: At least three. And you know how high school is probably a more stratified society than any in existence, so there were all these circles. [laughter]

TURNER: Then after high school, you got your B.A. [Bachelor of Arts], and an M.A.[Master of Arts] as well, from CSU-Los Angeles [California State University, Los Angeles]. Did you go straight there from high school, or was there something else in between?

PACHON: No, I went straight there. The interesting thing is--again, put this in the context of the early 1960s--it was August 1963. I had graduated from high school in June of '63 and my brother says to

me, Harry, what college are you going to go to? I said, well, I'm waiting for them to contact me. He says, you idiot, you haven't applied? I said, no, I thought they were supposed to contact you automatically. No, no, no, you have to go apply. So, I went to East L.A. [Los Angeles] College and tried to apply. And I may be one of the few people that was rejected by East L.A. College, because they said, all our classes are full. You can't come in here. So, I went to Cal State L.A. and at that time, thankfully, they had openings. So it was probably one of the most fortunate things that could have happened to me because I got a very good education, I feel, at the Cal State University.

TURNER: Cal State L.A., in the sixties, there was a lot of activity, a lot of student movements, what experiences did you have with this aspect of college?

PACHON: You have to remember that the entire framework of student support was different. So, earning a living, while going to school full-time, was a major concern. So, it was a very proletarian school. By that I mean that everybody worked. I worked anywhere from twenty to sixty hours a week when I was going to Cal State L.A. But on top of

that, add the Vietnam War, so that if you didn't carry fourteen units--a full load--you were, bye-bye. Vietnam, here I come. [Laughter]

TURNER: What were some of the jobs you held while you were going to school there?

PACHON: Let's see, everything from library aide to working in a bank opening up envelopes. When people pay their bills, they all get sent to a post office box. But one forgets that there's some poor schmuck out there having to take that bill and look at it and see if it's a full-paid or part-paid or did they forget to sign the check, so I would open up envelopes. Then I was again very fortunate and got a job at the Los Angeles County Law Library, which paid a tremendous salary for that day and age. And I worked there all the way through my Master's.

TURNER: You said you were interested in studying politics from a very early age, were you always studying political science in college?

PACHON: Yes, I was studying government and comparative politics and public administration. Because I said if I can't be a faculty member, I would always have a fall-back position with public administration, sort of internalizing the fact that we are subject to market forces.

TURNER: Very forward-thinking. You had mentors that helped direct you along that path?

PACHON: Very much. A couple of professors, Robert Simmons, who is now retired, in political science. A guy named Carpenter, who taught comparative politics, I was a t.a. [teaching assistant] for him. There was Don Bray, who taught Latin American studies, who was a very good instructor. So I felt very positive about them.

TURNER: You mentioned a Latin American studies class, I don't think that at that time there was a specific Latin American Studies, or Chicano Studies, major field of study, is that right?

PACHON: Definitely. In fact it wasn't until the late sixties. Everything was occurring at the same time. There was Vietnam, the assassinations, there was the black civil rights struggle, the counterculture movement. Everything was coming together and impinging upon you while you were going to school--carrying fifteen units because you were worried about being drafted--and working forty hours a week so that you can make ends meet. It was existence, but we now look in retrospect at the sixties and we forget that everyday life goes on.

TURNER: There was a lot to think about. So thinking back on studying politics at that time, was there anything specific that you focused on or wanted to specialize in?

PACHON: No, I wanted to be an academic. I suspected that it was probably a very good career, and I really enjoyed the intellectual stimulus. And the academic life seemed very attractive to me. I was pushed to be an attorney by my folks, but I never had the inclination for that.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Session 2, July 14, 1997]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

TURNER: When we left off last time, we were talking about your years in college. I don't think I asked you where you were living when you were going to Cal State?

PACHON: I was living in Pasadena. I remember I rented a space from a very well-to-do couple who rented out the overhead to their garage. It was a small one-bedroom apartment over a garage.

TURNER: So that was your first experience living on your own?

PACHON: Yes, because I had been living with my brother prior to that. It was a very positive experience.

TURNER: Your brother and his family still lived here in the L.A. area?

PACHON: Oh, yes. I was still very close to my brother.

TURNER: What were, overall, your impressions of Southern California, especially compared to the Miami you'd grown up in?

PACHON: I guess the one overall impression was the vastness of the place as opposed to Miami. The Miami I grew up in, as I mentioned before, was a small town that would only get really invigorated every winter when the snowbirds would come in--the so-called snowbirds, the northern tourists--who went to Miami Beach. So it was a very small city in comparison to Los Angeles. The overall impression that I had of L.A. was that there was tremendous opportunity here, tremendous opportunity in so far as lower cost of education, job opportunities, things like that.

TURNER: And being in L.A. at that particular time--the late sixties and early seventies--you must have seen firsthand a good deal of development of political movements generally and then specifically Latino political movements as well. What events stand out in your mind as turning points?

PACHON: I think that there were really three to four streams of things going on in the late sixties that come to bear on the political movement. I think one was the bold counter-culture type

experiences that were being felt in American society, that things were being questioned--icons were being questioned--traditional ways of doing things were being analyzed. Second was the anti-war movement. Third was the black civil rights struggle. And then if you put all of those things together, it was like a politicization of the community. And the thing that really seemed to turn things around, I think, was the black civil rights struggle in the 1960s. There was a real curious feeling amongst Latinos that they were playing by the rules and when African-Americans rioted, for example, in several cities, all of these programs began to be developed. And there was almost a questioning of--my gosh, do we have to riot too in order to improve our condition in life? Because sub-standard education--things like that--were still very much present in Latino communities. And there was still very much overt prejudice during that time. I can't tell you how many times I was told, for example, since I don't look Latino, "you're different than they," they being Mexican Americans or Latinos in general. I think I mentioned last time that I have a letter of recommendation from a counselor to a community

college saying that I would be the perfect candidate because I could teach an ethnic studies course but I--quote--"don't look Mexican." So, there was still that feeling of discrimination that existed against Mexican Americans, and I guess Latinos in general. With all of this sort of question that was going on in the larger American society and everything came together. I think the key things--at least in Los Angeles--during that time were two things: One was the high school demonstrations that occurred about substandard education, what they called the blowouts. And even as significant were the riots that occurred as a result of the anti-war marches in 1969 and 1970 and 1971.

TURNER: Is this the Chicano Moratorium?

PACHON: Yeah. But see, it wasn't so much a moratorium. That's what we call it now from the retrospect of 1997, but then it was: look there is a tremendous disparity in so far as Mexican American and Latinos getting drafted into the Vietnam War, and yet conditions haven't improved. And there was a resonance with the whole anti-war movement that was going on. So when the marches got started they all ended up in some sort of violence. In fact, I just went to dinner with

our trustees and there were three of us at the table--all Latino--and we determined that we were within about 500 yards of each other during the first anti-war march in East L.A. in 1969 that ended up in a riot. I mean, it's amazing, here we are thirty years later and we can all place ourselves within 500 yards of that particular incident on that particular day that resulted in the death of a famous Latino journalist, Reuben Salazar.

TURNER: So that's one event that you recall playing a role in, having an active part in.

PACHON: No. No, I was not active. Let me put it very straightforward. I was a participant, but not in any way leadership or anything like that. I was just one of the nameless faces in the crowd that was there. One thing we forget about the late 1960s is that when this ethnic political mobilization occurred it didn't occur in a vacuum. All of a sudden colleges and universities were scrambling, trying to respond to ethnic demands. So, it wasn't only internally, but it was also externally that people were saying "oh my gosh, what is it that we can do? How can we appease? How can we satisfy or mollify these demands?"

TURNER: I imagine there were a lot of questions like that and different folks came up with different answers or tried different solutions. Which attempts at solving these problems do you recall feeling were the most effective?

PACHON: I disagreed with the entire violence and conflict approaches that were popular at the time. I was then becoming a college instructor. I was teaching at a community college, Mt. San Antonio College. My ideological orientation was that you should work within the system. If you want to work externally from the system, then you as an individual should also be a person who is willing to take the risks, take the penalties associated with working outside the system. In other words, I did not advocate violence for my students or demonstrations that would result in getting arrested if I myself wasn't willing to be in a demonstration, getting arrested. Since I did not think that that was right at that time I could not advocate that. So, for me, it was almost like, I was a liberal in 1969 and I'm a liberal in 1997, even though now it's a dirty word.

TURNER: Did you feel like you had a special--or higher--degree of responsibility since you were responsible for shaping the minds of young people

as well--or at least being a role model--being a teacher?

PACHON: I felt like I had to lay out that there were many options that were open and that what was getting the press, for example, was only one avenue: the violent demonstrations and stuff, or getting arrested by boycotting a building. Sure, those were providing political resources, but at the same time organizing, getting out the vote, working in a campaign, those were all good things too. And I tell you something else, it was really difficult during those times to articulate these perspectives because you were being accused of being a sellout or you were not considered to be politically correct, from that perspective.

TURNER: Almost as if you weren't doing enough because you weren't doing the most extreme thing possible?

PACHON: Yes. I always thought it was hypocritical for any college professor to advocate that the hegemonic state was in total control in American society and therefore you should be violently reacting against it when they're drawing a salary from that hegemonic state and they are not willing to be out on the street and put their life on the line. I feel very strongly about that. And it still upsets me when I hear this

type of rhetoric by some tenured professor in the UC [University of California] system or whatever who talk this way and who, to my knowledge, has never been out there.

TURNER: It's easier when you're comfortable...

PACHON: Yes. They're what they used to call armchair radicals. But that's my perspective. I respect others' perspectives. My hat goes off to those folks who actually were out there. I know people whose political careers were ruined by being arrested, for example, by handcuffing themselves to the doors of the Catholic church downtown, protesting the fact that the Catholic church wasn't being responsive to the Latino community. They were arrested and charged with felony trespass, sometimes with felonies. They had no problem with this. These were things that happened, and I respect that. But they were there. They weren't behind a crowd somewhere urging people on.

TURNER: In thinking about working from within the system to make change, one of the movements that was going on around that time that was part of the political system was the development of La Raza Unida as a political party. What are you memories of that political party?

PACHON: I think it served some very positive functions in retrospect, especially in Texas where it woke up the Democratic Party to the fact that Chicano/Latinos were a key ingredient for Democratic Party victories. I think it did similar things here. For me, the math never made sense. At that time, when you represent something like 20 percent or 30 percent of the population--only 10 percent of the electorate--to have an independent political party that is solely ethnic based doesn't make sense, insofar as winning. And since in political races you were interested in winning, one of the things you can do is make a calculus in your head and say which do I want to do? Do I want to go ethnic specific or do I want to try to influence one of the mainstream parties? So, I was never involved in La Raza Unida. I was never a heavy critic of it. It was always much more present in Texas than it was in California. Even though there was a La Raza Unida candidate--Ricardo Romo--who ran against Richard Alatorre, and resulted in Richard Alatorre getting defeated his first time, when he ran for office in 1974. LRU was never a major force, at least not in the world I lived in, the L.A. that I lived in in the early 1970s.

TURNER: Was it your perception at the time that the party was there to win elections or to influence the system in some other way, just by making a statement?

PACHON: It was understandable because the whole Latino community was so tied to the Democratic Party and really not that many candidates being put up for statewide office or local offices, so it was used as an incentive. It was understandable, that there would be a tremendous frustration with the Democratic Party. But I remember that that was only one segment of the movement. There was a whole other segment of the movement which was anti-war, which was more discrete things, like successive stages. There was a whole bunch of people concurrently involved in La Raza Unida, there was a whole bunch of people involved in anti-war efforts, there was a whole bunch of people involved in the educational arena--trying to set up ethnic studies programs in the universities--and your time's taken up with those things. So, you weren't jumping from one to another. Your issues were surrounded by what you were doing. And you read about for example--or you hear about from your colleagues or your friends--all of these efforts and say "that's

valid for me to join, that's not valid for me to join." Overlay this on everyday life concerns of getting--since you're a graduate student--of getting your dissertation finished, of passing your quals, and of getting enough money to be able to finish your quals.

TURNER: So, contextually, there were a lot of other things to think about.

PACHON: Yes.

TURNER: Speaking about that...

PACHON: For instance, let me give you an example. 1969 through 1971, I started the Mexican American studies program--the first Chicano studies taught at Mt. SAC [Mt. San Antonio College]--was taught by myself in conjunction with a historian, Francine Medeiros. And I was an advisor to the MECHA that was on campus at the time. And I was also going full-time to graduate school here at CGS [The Claremont Graduate School]. In 1971 I was recruited and managed to get a full-time position, after I passed my quals, at Loyola Marymount University as an assistant professor of political science. So, you have a full-time position, you're working with student groups, you're associated with student activism, and then there was the demand being made on you by the

school, so how many hours are there in a day? So, people were making life choices, how to allocate their time.

TURNER: A lot going on, certainly a lot for you to think about. How did the Mt. San Antonio position come about originally?

PACHON: That was the funniest thing, what I talked to you about, how the society responded to the pressures of the community. I received my Master's in 1968 and I applied...

[Interruption]

PACHON: ... Here I had done well in my Master's program at Cal State L.A.. I had good GRE [Graduate Record Examination] scores. I was taking courses here [The Claremont Graduate School]. I had been accepted and got a full tuition ride from one of the California fellowship programs. So, I thought I was doing well. I applied for community college jobs throughout Southern California. Nada. Nothing. 1968-1969 there were struggles in the barrios, riots in 1969. All of a sudden, I'm getting recruited from the same colleges that were turning me down without any qualms. "Oh, we'd like you to teach this ethnic studies course." So, I saw the difference between pre-affirmative action--as it were--and

post-affirmative action. I had been accepted here [The Claremont Graduate School] pre-affirmative action. And, the point I was trying to make was that society itself was trying to respond. I guess if you're one of those people that believe in hegemonic theories this is the way that hegemonic regimes incorporate the dissenting elements. It was amazing. So, Mt. SAC [Mt. San Antonio College] came about because all of a sudden they needed a Mexican American politics course and they looked through their résumés and there was only one person who had the right number of syllables in their last name and I had done research in the area and I was qualified and so I got that chance. It was a great experience. It was an exciting time. We were teaching courses that were imaginative for community colleges. The lowest number of students we had was 125. They were big courses. I still run into my former students. I go to functions and see people I had way back in 1969.

TURNER: Did you find that the students interested in taking these classes were mostly Latino students?

PACHON: Oh, yes. 90 percent were Latino students. And there was no literature--no writings--so you

really had to pull together diverse sorts of things to try to cover the course.

TURNER: And this is the same time that you were a student too, at CGS?

PACHON: Yes.

TURNER: How did you decide on Claremont?

PACHON: I was completely ignorant of graduate schools, just like I was ignorant of college education, although I was better prepared for my graduate education. I was getting my Master's, and I applied at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles], University of New Mexico, and at Claremont. I was accepted all three places, and I wanted to study Latin American studies. The University of New Mexico said we'd love to have you here, but we don't have any Latin American studies programs Talk about not knowing what you've got. UCLA accepted me, but no financial assistance whatsoever. Claremont accepted me and they offered me a financial aid package. So that's how come I came here. I was also recruited for Stanford, and so I went up to Stanford and it was a very negative experience. I got a letter back from them--from one of my advisors--saying that "Mr. Pachon does not see himself as a Mexican American." Which I wasn't.

I'm Colombian [laughter]. So, I guess I didn't fit their profile. Interesting times.

TURNER: You mentioned you had an interest in pursuing Latino politics in graduate school, what did you see as your options in that direction here in Claremont?

PACHON: I saw my options as getting a well-rounded education in political science. Whereas my interest in Latino politics was going to be subsidiary and independent from the overall education I was going to get here at the graduate school. So I took these courses, a very interesting set of courses--I still remember some of them and some of the faculty members--very interesting courses. But I wasn't totally laser-focused, as it were, on what I was going to do. My interest was in getting the coursework out of the way, and getting the quals out of the way, and then looking at a dissertation topic that would link together some of my interests.

TURNER: Who do you feel were some of the most influential individuals on shaping your academic outlook at CGS?

PACHON: That's real easy. I'd say George Blair, Merrill Goodall, John Raser--who used to be here in International Relations--those three were the

ones that really stand out. Another person named Johnson--I forget his first name--he was a sociology professor at Pitzer College and taught graduate courses. The first three that I mentioned, in addition to Johnson. Merrill Goodall, very, very supportive, very encouraging from what I recall, telling me that I could do it. I think that many of us who come through the state college system always feel like we haven't had the right type of education so therefore we started like a foot behind somebody who had an ivy league education. And I think that Merrill Goodall did an awful lot so far as saying that we should be here.

TURNER: Were there other Latino students at Claremont, or other students interested in Latino issues at that time?

PACHON: There was one who was finishing his dissertation --Miguel de Tirado--who had come in before I did. He did his dissertation on Mexican American volunteer organizations. But I met him the day that I took my quals. I was kind of caught off guard that there was another Latino student. I think I told you the story that here at CGS somebody came up to me and said, "are you, by the

way, of Latin American descent?" And I said yes, and they said "good, we have one!" [laughter]

TURNER: And that's all they needed.

PACHON: They didn't even know that I was Hispanic, Latin. And then they could put me down as one person for some administrative.... Because I guess they had to fill out an EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] report or something. And so it was almost like "oh, we have one."

TURNER: At that time, in the early seventies, you were writing your dissertation on ethnicity, poverty, and political participation, the study of ethnicity was still just starting to regain some momentum in academic circles. It had been popular, although in a different form, earlier in the century, but at this time it was starting to emerge again. Was it difficult to find acceptance for this field in the early seventies? Did you run into any closed doors because people would not see the relevance?

PACHON: I can't honestly address that question because here I never had that. All I had was encouragement from the faculty. They were very interested in class and ethnicity, how the concepts overlapped. And then when I got into the job market, face it, I mean, there were very

few Latino political scientists back in the early 1970s. So, I could have been studying Martian geography and they would have been interested. I guess it was a different time. At Loyola University, where I was recruited, they were very fascinated with my topic simply because they could all relate to the issue, being here in Southern California. So I never got to the point where I was being told, like one of my colleagues now at a major university, "well, you should do something different in terms of research if you want to get tenure." That didn't happen to me. When I went to Michigan State [Michigan State University] as a faculty member that was not a problem at all.

TURNER: Did you have more than one post-doc [post-doctoral]?

PACHON: Yes. The first post-doc I was on, from the National Endowment for the Humanities, because basically I felt like, having been exposed to the larger world of university life, I really felt like I needed more refinement, more of a chance to study. So I applied for the NEH and I stipulated that I wanted to work with Joan Moore, who was one of the seminal figures in the field of ethnic research. She had done a major ground-

breaking study on Mexican Americans back in the 1960s. She was then at the University of Southern California. So I got a post-doc from the NEH and it was a great year. I worked with her. We got a book out during that time. She heavily influenced me that there should be a linkage between a university and the community, that they should not be separated, that there had been a great deal of academics that had lent themselves to progressive politics that improved life in very specified circumstances. So during the year I worked with ex-convicts. I worked on proposals, helped write proposals. I worked with them on some research that they were doing. I was trying to develop this ex-con organization so that the people coming out of prison wouldn't have such high recidivism rates. It was a great experience. I mean, I had never really been exposed to this segment of the population.

Just one real brief anecdote: There were progressive politics on the west side of L.A. that were very progressive, remember this is back in 1973. And I was approached by a group of leftists, and it turned out that their real agenda was really much more extreme than my conscience could bear. You know my philosophy.

And I said, "no, I'm not going to have any truck with that." And they said, "well, Harry, you're part of us and there aren't any exceptions. We think that you're not being true to the progressive ideals." Well, to make a long story short, they got to the point of threatening me. So I went back and told the convicts that I was working with, "gosh, I've really had this horrible experience with this group that I was working with." They said, "Harry, if you're ever threatened, just call on us."

It was a weird time in the 1970s, watching now, how serious those things are, and how fortunate I was to be able to work in all of these diverse environments. I took the experiences of working with convicts at my post-doctorate and when I went to Michigan State I wasn't going to be involved at all in the community. I had been involved here, but I decided that when I got to Michigan I was going to be a straight academic. After six months I said, "Jeez, I really liked that," and started working with the Pinto Project, which was an organization to try and help convicts adjust to the outside so as to reduce recidivism. And so I

worked with them for the rest of the time I was at Michigan State.

[Interruption]

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[End Session 2]

[Session 3, July 23, 1997]

[Tape 2, Side A]

TURNER: When we finished last time I think we were starting to discuss your years in Washington D.C. One thing I was interested in was, how did working in Washington change your perception of the political process, something that you had already taught, but then really experienced firsthand, and then subsequently went back to teach?

PACHON: I think that one perception I think I mentioned last time is that some of our methodologies that we use in political science research--such as survey research--do not get to the full complexity of political life. That was number one. Number two, I curiously became much more tolerant, working on the Hill, than I had been in academia. I think I also mentioned this: the saying that reasonable people disagree. You get

some very smart people on both sides of the aisle. You begin to pick up that sort of respect for other people's opinions. And it, perhaps, makes you less dogmatic than you might be, than I myself was in academia. So, for me, it was a very enriching experience. I think point number three about me being in Washington, as opposed to just being centered in the academic world, is that I learned that intelligence is distributed throughout many institutions in American society. I'm simplifying, of course, but perhaps there is a tendency to think that a published article or a book is the measure for intellectual achievement. But there are some fantastic senior executive service people--in the Defense Department or in Health and Human Services--who are brilliant and you do not see their brilliance because it is not communicated in the currency that we in the academy value, which is a published book. But they are as influential and they have as much impact as perhaps the article or the published book. Those are, from the top of my head, three things that I can think of in Washington that I didn't have in the academy.

TURNER: So, there's something that's making the bureaucratic structure work, you have faith in the people that are working in these positions?

PACHON: Well, it's like everything else. There's some good and there's some bad people, and clichés like that. It's not one-dimensional. You can't paint it with one single brush-stroke. What I'm saying is that you find some very brilliant people. You also find some drones, especially perhaps at the mid-level and at the lower levels of the bureaucratic structure. But you get people, for example, at the Office of Management and Budget, people at the Appropriations Committee--staffers--that have been there for fifteen or twenty years. I mean those folks, you'd be amazed at how they are able to conceptualize, how they're able to project forward thinking. You talk to people at the Air Force, we had a good friend in Washington who was an Air Force General who had been over in Vietnam on 168 missions flying, with the chances of getting shot down tremendous. At first you would classify him as "oh, my goodness, here is a militarist thinker." Then you start talking to him and some very sophisticated awareness of political and socio-political events in the world

that rivaled, if not exceeded, an awful lot of my colleagues at the universities that I had been associated with.

TURNER: So being involved in both the process and the teaching of the process allowed you to see both sides and gain a greater respect for both?

PACHON: For both, I think that's a very fair way to put it. I gained a greater respect and a greater appreciation for both. And there's also the dimension that one develops being in the political sphere that when you see political events and you've been in Washington or you've been involved in whatever level--the state House, if you've been involved in Sacramento Politics--you ask: "Okay, who wins? Who benefits? What's the real issue here?" Because there is an awful lot of surface storm and thunder and sometimes the real issues are below the surface.

TURNER: In those years, what would you say was the most challenging thing that you had to face, or goal that you had to accomplish?

PACHON: I think learning about the experiential dimension without having the experience. I had mentioned that the literature doesn't give you guidelines for acting. So how to act in situations where there are no guidelines, you really have to have

your antenna out and you have to be very aware of cues that are in the environment. Like I said, it was a fantastic learning experience.

TURNER: Speaking of this different perception of the academy and what goes on in practice, one thing academics have focused on when thinking about Congress in general is the narrow-minded focus on re-election as being the goal of legislators. While obviously that is a consideration, did you find that to be a predominant focus of legislators that you dealt with, or what did you see as some of the prime motivations for action in Washington?

PACHON: I can't answer that fully because, what was it that Napoleon said, about the person who knows least about the battle is the soldier that's in the battle? So I worked in an office where we were in a safe congressional district. The member that I worked for was getting seventy, eighty percent of the vote. So we weren't in one of these highly contested fifty-five, fifty-two percent districts that had you really sweating bullets on election night. So I didn't see that as much. Frankly, that is a concern for many members. But what I saw was, again, it can't be answered from my perspective because I didn't

work in that type of office. The people who I interacted with, their big races--their big battles--had been winning the primary to get elected, because most of the Hispanic members of Congress come from safe, Democratic districts. So if you win the primary, you're in. It's a slam dunk, as it were. So, I didn't have that experience. I think that the thing I saw the members really wrestling with sometimes was taking a look at national federal policy and seeing how it applied to their districts. Saying, "what does this mean? How will it affect my district?" And bringing the experiences of their districts to bear on the decision-making. But also ideology, ideology was also very present in decision-making.

TURNER: You were in Washington consistently for those several years, but then since leaving Washington you've gone back several times to testify before various Congressional committees. What has that experience been like and what has been the subject matter?

PACHON: It's been primarily in one field and that's been the field of naturalization. Basically, I got involved in naturalization back in the 1970s, when I started doing research on Latino politics

and there was this whole set of literature that said that Latinos don't participate in American politics because of their Iberio-American culture that had strong roots in the Catholic hierarchical system as well as the Spanish authoritarian rule, mixed in with an Aztec authoritarianism. And I would look at this and say, my God, I have not known anybody that has these sorts of manifestations. When I would take a look at census data I would say, well, the reason that Latinos do not vote is that they cannot vote. They cannot vote because they are not U.S. citizens. They are legal permanent residents, or they may be here with visas, or whatever. So, getting started with that in 1975 when I first wrote about it in a book with Joan Moore called Mexican Americans, then in the 1980s when I left the Hill--and even during the time when I was on the Hill--I would keep on saying that the reason Latinos don't vote is because they can't, not because they don't want to. So, that led to my interest in naturalization. I was funded for naturalization research by the Ford Foundation and by several other foundations in the 1980s. As a consequence, when the Hill dealt with naturalization matters I've been asked to

testify a couple of times. And typically I go back and give my perspectives on the naturalization process, which is interestingly one of the few topics that is mentioned in both the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence. So it's an integral part of the American polity, the integrating of the immigrant into the political sphere. But, it's been a subject that--until the past few years--wasn't researched much. There was a hiatus in research in naturalization between the 1930s, 1940s, all the way up until about the 1970s.

TURNER: So, now from the perspective of having researched and having been into that issue for a couple of decades now, what changes have you seen in the development of that issue, both from the perspective of what the data are actually saying and then also from how it's perceived in Washington?

PACHON: There's been a massive sea change in regards to naturalization in the past twenty years. First of all, it's become a salient issue, unfortunately with negative overtones. Right now people think that naturalization is a process that was used by the [William J.] Clinton

Administration to get more Democrats into the process. But the fact is that when people talk about naturalization, they know what it is. It used to be that if you referred to citizenship--said that Latinos lacked citizenship--people would think that I was talking about Latinos not taking any civics classes. So now people are more fully aware of it.

There has been a move on the bureaucracy's part to try to streamline the naturalization process. We haven't seen the full ramifications of that. Basically, the naturalization process remained unchanged for about fifty years. You filled out these questions that had their basis in American history dating back to the 1790s. For example, they asked you, "have you ever held title of nobility?" And that's because the Constitution prohibits titles of nobility. So, in the naturalization application they ask you if you've ever held title of nobility in your home country. And that goes back to 1790. There's questions loaded on there from the 1940s and 1950s when they were extremely concerned about communism and the Nazi Party. So we are asking eighteen, nineteen year-old Salvadorans right now "have you ever been a member of the S.S. [Schutz

Stassel, Nazi elite guard]?" Well, okay, it's good to weed out S.S. members, but maybe we should have a cutoff date when we stop asking about the S.S. Because look at it, if you'd been a member of the S.S. what's the youngest you could have been? Maybe twelve years old. Twelve years old in 1945, so--anyone under sixty-seven should not be asked that question any more. There's a weight of these questions that's still there.

And there's an inertia. We now have over ten million foreign-born people in the United States who are not U.S. citizens. It's an integration process and the question is how difficult do you want to make that integration? Do we really want to ask questions that were relevant a hundred years ago to these folks? And if they fail to answer these questions correctly, is it right for the American polity to weed out those individuals because they can't answer a question that has its roots in 1790?

So, what have I seen as far as changes? One, salience. Two, trying to streamline the process. Three, the rise of community-based organizations. Back in 1985 I came into the Southern California area and I took a look at who was providing

naturalization services. There were six organizations. Now, in 1997, there are six organizations right here in the immediate Pomona Valley. Everybody is doing naturalization service. So there has been a proliferation of naturalization organizations between 1985 and 1997, which is very heartening to see. When I first started I had a small grant from the Gannett Foundation and Chevron--Chevron's no longer in existence--each of them gave me $5,000. And I held a national conference in Washington D.C. to talk about naturalization. Less than fifty people attended, in 1984. Now if you had a conference like that, my gosh, hundreds of people would come. So it's heartening to see that progress has been made for these particular people. And we're not going to return either. I mean, now that you have that infrastructure out there you're not going to see that infrastructure eliminated because the demand is so great.

TURNER: That is a big change. You mentioned the inertia that is part of the system. I imagine that with any change there is some sort of resistance to that change. What sort of challenges and resistance have you faced or have you seen being erected to the changes in this process?

PACHON: The INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] is a bureaucracy, with all the positive points and all the negative points associated with that term. During the first couple of years--maybe the first six years--of research that I was involved naturalization, one of the things that really bothered us--and still does ten years later--is that there is still a lot of discretionary behavior on the part of the individual INS examiner. That discretionary behavior, more often than not, is used in a positive way. But in a minority of cases--let's say 10 percent--it's used negatively. The inertia of trying to change that culture, so that you no longer have agents who could fail you or they could fail me in a naturalization exam. Let me give you an example. I've had reports of people asked, back in the 1980s, how many Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock? Grant was what President of the United States? What number was he? Name the order in which the colonies became states?

TURNER: Just absurd things.

PACHON: Yeah. I don't know if you can answer them. It's 123 Pilgrims, by the way, that landed at Plymouth Rock. We had to find that out. But, how would

you know that? So you do have that inertia that's there of letting the individual examiner ask questions that sometimes a small percentage of them abuse. Now, others use it in a very positive way. For example, I remember a story where the woman was practically hysterical. Well, first of all, immigrants have been out of school for an awful long time. They are scared of losing their visa. This is a very significant step for them. So, she's trembling in her chair. And the examiner asked her, "who was the first President of the United States?" And the woman blurts out "George Washington Bridge" because she lived in New York and there's the famous bridge there. And the examiner says, "close enough, you pass." Okay, that's somebody taking into account all the variables here. But that sort of discretionary behavior is still troublesome. And that's one of the big obstacles that I've encountered.

Curiously, the INS really respected our research. We did a national survey of immigrants--asked a national probability sample of 1600 immigrants their attitudes toward naturalization--and we found that 90 percent of immigrants had a positive experience with INS. I

was told by one INS district director in Chicago, "when I read that, I couldn't believe it, that you were actually reporting something positive." Because the tradition had been--in the Latino community anyway--that the INS was always the enemy. But it turned out that 90 percent of the people said that they had very positive experiences. So we just reported the facts. We had a very positive reaction to that study.

The other difficulty or resistance from the bureaucracy has been deciphering the bureaucratic codes. Let me give you another example. When I first started doing naturalization research in the 1980s we were having a situation where Mexican immigrants--along with Canadians--had the lowest naturalization rates. So I went up to the head of naturalization at the INS and I said "Mike, why do you think Mexican immigrants don't naturalize?" This was Mike Miller, who used to be the director of naturalization. And he said, "well, I think Mexicans don't really want to become citizens." He showed me, "look, of all the people that we get through the process, only 1 percent fail. So, it's not our fault. That's their problem." And I would ask community-based organizations, why don't more people naturalize?

And they would say, "oh, the process is so difficult Señor Pachon." And I would hear all these horror stories. So I had A equals non-A. And then we commissioned a research study where I had a researcher go around to each of the INS offices to examine the actual process itself. And he reported and it turns out that if you fill out your form incorrectly, it's a return--not a failure--it's called a return. If you can't answer how many Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, I do not fail you, I say "maybe you should withdraw your application."

TURNER: So, on paper . . .

PACHON: It shows up as a 1 percent failure rate. But if you add up returns and withdrawals, it's 30 percent. And it was like a light went off in our heads. This is it! This is why Mike Miller can tell me there is a very low failure rate and this is why the community-based people can say it's really hard to get through. So, deciphering things was hard.

They raised the fee to ninety-five dollars. Do you know that to apply for citizenship you pay a fee and some of your money goes not to pay for the naturalization process but to fund asylum and refugees? Now, I don't know if that's equitable

or not. I really wonder if that's equitable. Why should a legal permanent resident fund refugees and asylum?

TURNER: It's almost an unrelated issue.

PACHON: Yes. But, this is where I got into some trouble with some of the Washington advocates. I was dead-set against any increase in fees because part of it was going to go to fund this. And they, being good liberals, said, oh, that's all right. The immigrant who makes $12,000 a year can afford to pay another ten dollars, fifteen dollars to give asylum to a refugee. And I felt there was a cognitive disassociation there.

TURNER: One can see how, on the surface, they are both situations dealing with people who aren't U.S. citizens, but beyond that they are very different.

PACHON: They're very different aren't they? But naturalization has never been a cause célèbre of the Immigration establishment in Washington D.C. Not until maybe about a couple of years ago. There were sexier issues--refugees, dissidents--that your hearts go out to. But the people who come here with legal visas, they work all their lives, and then want to become U.S. citizens, that hasn't been a focus, until recently. I can

tell you that from experience, that's one thing I literally can tell you from experience.

TURNER: Related to immigration, and part of what has gained focus in recent years, has to do with voting, becoming registered to vote, and then in the larger sense, how a larger Latino community in Southern California has changed the shape of voting districts and who is elected from Southern California. Although that's been a very recent issue as well, it goes back a ways. I believe in 1981 you came to Claremont to speak about redistricting at that time. That would have been after the 1980 census, when that was becoming a larger issue. Do you remember what was involved there?

PACHON: I didn't come to Claremont.

TURNER: Oh, you didn't.

PACHON: I never visited Claremont after I got my degree in 1974. I never came back until I was recruited for this position as the Kenan Professor in 1987. So, for thirteen years, I never set foot on the campus. I thought that that was a stage of my life that I had concluded and I . . .

TURNER: You didn't anticipate coming back?

PACHON: I never anticipated coming back. But then when I got recruited I said, "wow, this is not bad." I

remember a very positive experience here, a very good faculty that I could interact with. It was quite an honor to be recruited back to your alma mater, as it were. I never stayed in contact with the people I went through the Ph.D. program with, I don't know them. I don't know what happened. Maybe it was because I moved so much. I moved from Claremont to Michigan to Washington, and then I stayed in Washington for quite a few years--eleven years--and then I moved back to Claremont. So maybe that's like a disassociation, as it were.

TURNER: You mentioned that, after leaving your work in Washington D.C., you went back to academia, and this was at City University of New York, Baruch College?

PACHON: Yes, Baruch College.

TURNER: What prompted that change, to come back to academics?

PACHON: I didn't want to be a fifty-year-old chief of staff. Washington is so much fun, it is so exciting, but then you start seeing patterns emerge. If you don't go back, then twenty, thirty years fly by. And I just felt that being a chief of staff was very, very impressive work, but I needed to strike out on my own. Carve out

my own niche, not being a support person for another guy. And I looked around at my colleagues and I said, "jeez, if I don't move then I'm going to be here for an awful long time." And I said, "that's not really what I want."

And I got recruited. I got recruited by the Department of Public Administration at the City University of New York. They offered me an associate professorship and I took a $13,000 pay cut, which in those days was a lot of money. I started teaching at the City University and my fields were politics and public administration. I taught there from 1981 through December 1986, and then I started in January 1987 at Claremont. And that's the time when I was doing consulting and a whole bunch of things besides my actual faculty position. I did a lot of consulting--in Central America, in the Caribbean, wherever they had a need--for the Agency of International Development.

And in about 1982 Congressman [Edward R.] Roybal and Congressman [Robert] Garcia, who -- those two and myself--had established the NALEO [National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials] Education Fund back in 1980,

approached me and said, "Look, the person that we brought on is leaving and we would like for you to take over." And I said that one of the stipulations was I would become Executive Director of the NALEO Education Fund on the condition that I could retain my position at City University of New York. So I think that in 1982, in retrospect I made a real conscious decision to let that phase go, the consulting.

TURNER: You must have been a very busy person during those years. You were Executive Director, and then also teaching full-time as well?

PACHON: Yes. But I was buying some courses off. And remember, when I took over the NALEO job....I don't know, did I mention this before?

TURNER: No, we hadn't gotten to NALEO yet, but this would be a good time.

PACHON: When I took over NALEO, we had a budget of $28,000, for a national organization. I looked at this budget and I said to Congressman Garcia and to Congressman Roybal: "We're not going to make it for a year. So what I'd like to do is propose a six-month budget, and we will spend all the money in six months. We will spend $27,800." So Roybal asks, "What's the $200 surplus for?" And I said, "that's to print up my résumés if

this thing doesn't work out so I can go back to my consulting and pay my rent, do things like that." [laughter] And they said sure, let's go for it. So I took a real big risk. Because, you know, doing that consulting work was very lucrative, and in conjunction with my academic position there was a tremendous amount of financial incentive to stay involved with that, as opposed to taking over an organization with a total of $28,000, four boxes, and two typewriters and that was the extent of the organization.

TURNER: So, was your plan for the Education Fund to do so much--as much as you could--in that six months to be able to make a name for the organization and get support to carry on further?

PACHON: Yes. What I did was I started putting out press releases--things you could do real easily--taking a look at a statistical yearbook that comes out from the government and, for example, Hispanic representation in elected office. We only had to take a look at the percentage calculated and that got, really, a good response. We started doing things like that, quick and dirty type of analyses. I remember one time a foundation officer called me and said, "You know something, this sounds really good, but I'm beginning to

worry that you're running this organization out of the trunk of your car." And the thing is, I was. [laughter]

So, I applied for a corporate grant to say, how many Hispanic elected officials are there in the United States? No one knew. So I filled out an application and got $25,000 for this research, and with that we started the National Roster of Hispanic Elected Officials, the first NALEO Education Fund publication. So, grant money, and then the other money came from the Ford Foundation to say, look, everybody is talking about how Hispanics don't vote. They don't vote because they're not citizens. But why aren't they citizens? That very simple question, and Ford provided a $160,000 grant so we could study that issue. So, we were really close to going under. The plane came down real close to hitting the ground, but we managed to get the grants in six months and pull it up safely.

TURNER: And so this was based in Washington?

PACHON: In Washington. So, I would spend my time in Washington--I was living in Washington--and then I would fly twice a week to New York to teach. Again, I was incredibly busy. It was sixty-four

plane trips a semester. It's like going from here to [Las] Vegas.

TURNER: Yes. It's not a long trip, but still, it's taxing . . .

PACHON: In fact, I took everything except the boat. I took the plane, I took the train, the car, a bus. I was very lucky; it was deregulation. So I was flying back and forth for twenty-seven dollars.

TURNER: That was convenient.

PACHON: Yes, very convenient because I could still maintain--I didn't have tenure at the University --so I had to work for tenure. So I had to be writing at the same time, and doing NALEO. So, it was a very busy time. It was a blur. I was very lucky my wife supported me very strongly throughout this.

TURNER: And this was, it seems like, a time when you were making some serious career choices. You chose academics over just being in Washington D.C. for your career. And also, you chose this type of policy research over the consulting. What did the consulting career consist of specifically and what led you to these decisions?

PACHON: I was doing a legislative training program for incoming legislators in countries that had not had strong legislative experience before. So, in

the Dominican Republic, for instance, there was a tremendous amount of democratic experiences there, essentially after the overthrow of [Rafael] Trujillo in 1960. They were getting a pattern of people coming in to a legislative office and having no idea how to act like a legislator. So, I was the consultant to Dominican-based universities--as well as to new members of their Congress--in setting up orientation programs and things that you wouldn't think of as novel here that are novel there, like simulating a bill-writing session and having people who were involved in responding to criticism placed in that position, in a country that, like I mentioned, until that time hadn't had that tradition.

TURNER: It seems like Americans tend to take democracy for granted sometimes, but that's not the tradition that many countries are used to.

PACHON: You've got to remember that democracy's not only substantive, but also a procedural issue. There are lots of important procedural things. In the DR--that's what we called the Dominican Republic --it was a tremendously exciting experience. I also worked in Honduras and Guatemala and there, it was a sham. There the people in Congress were

the people from the military and their institutions tended to lean more towards executive control. One of our really, really interesting developments in those countries--to underscore the realpolotik--there were definite PR [public relations] moves there. It was decided that, sure, we are never going to extend our brand of democratic state there but Congress was convinced that their decision to fund development was doing some good there, as it were, and it was building some houses for the homeless in Nicaragua.

But the Americans going down there, anyone who wasn't blind could see that--I took a military plane once, for example, down to Tegucigalpa--90 percent of the people on the plane were men. And all the men were about your age and they were all wearing khaki shirts, they all had buzz cuts, they all had tattoos. So, it didn't take a genius to figure out that they were all in the military. And they all called each other sergeant and captain. [laughter] You know, you didn't have to be an Einstein to figure it out. So the presence was very militarized. That's when I really started thinking about leaving. It was great, I saw things, saw the

arts--which are really great in Latin America--I really enjoyed doing the consulting.

TURNER: Did you enjoy the traveling?

PACHON: No. No, I didn't.

TURNER: So, that was another incentive to get out of that business?

PACHON: You bet. Personally, with NALEO, I had traveled so much raising support for that organization--New York, Florida, Panama--that I was tired of it.

TURNER: So, doing all these things at the same time, really a lot of what you were doing, the practical experience, must have been very useful in the classroom. In what ways have you incorporated your extensive personal experience with public policy issues in the classroom, in educating students about the process?

PACHON: I think that the one thing that you do is you tend to respect students with diverse viewpoints. You don't have the corner on the truth. So when a student says something that you personally doubt the veracity of, having been in the political arena you think about where that person is coming from and you tend to respond in a more gentle way.

TURNER: And you have good stories to share?

PACHON: Oh, sure. Anecdotes are great, and the students love them too. But the thing is, you don't want to just repeat old war stories. The stories need to illustrate a point, be relevant to the topic. For example, in the appropriations process sometimes you are in on the decision-making. One time NIMH--the old National Institute for Mental Health--had funded a research project exploring the demeanor of prostitutes in Bolivia. And this hit the Washington Post the day before the mark-up session.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

PACHON: And someone stood up in the session and said, "hey, they're sending someone out to study this, they're probably testing out the prostitutes themselves." Ha, ha, ha, and everybody laughed. "We should cut their funding by ten million dollars." And the next Congressman says, "ten million, hell, let's cut 'em twenty." And so the result was cutting the NIMH budget by twenty million dollars.

TURNER: Because of one program?

PACHON: One news story. And so everybody rationalizes. I think that another thing everybody thinks is that American politics should be incredibly logical, but in practice it's just not that way. You can have A and non-A in the same bill. For instance, in an immigration control act, you can have sanctions on the undocumented, tough laws on immigrants, you have an increase in the border patrol by 1000 officers, oh, and by the way, let's spend $150,000 on a special temporary workers' programs so temporary workers will have better living conditions. So you have all of these things in one bill and you're expected to resolve them. And if you try to be logical,

you'll go crazy. You're not going to get anywhere. The process is one where different people's interests are combined and you get this eclectic mixture. And so that's another thing that I learned from the experience I can also use in the classroom. And I think that experience yields a special believing in yourself. And that carries over into the classroom. And there's a sense that, having been in Washington . . .

TURNER: That you know what you're talking about?

PACHON: Yes, you do.

TURNER: Do any particular classes or subjects stand out in your mind as a favorite or that you have especially enjoyed teaching?

PACHON: I enjoy teaching U.S. immigration policy because it's such a complex area. There are so many different fields--structures--in immigration that are constructed, not learned. Half the class will feel one way and half the other, and certain opinions will change over the course of the class. And now that the literature has really exploded in the field, since the 1980s, there are so many more options. That's definitely one of my favorites. I enjoy teaching, at the [Claremont] Graduate School, there's a class called administrative process. There's a logic

to administration. The political process has a logical organization. There are tendencies in the administrative process and the immigration process that you can discover on close examination. Those two courses I really enjoy teaching. And, of course, I've always enjoyed teaching Latino politics. There are a number of different things--different sources--you can use there. None of the points of controversy, that you realize seem so one-sided in society, none of them are easily resolvable. Because it seems like there are winners and losers to every approach. And a lot of them are based in sand; a lot of the arguments seem to be continually shifting.

TURNER: And so, when you present these ideas you try to show both sides?

PACHON: Yes. Or, not only that, but you shouldn't be as confident with an idea that you have.

TURNER: Right. You mentioned that you taught at Baruch College until December of 1986, and then in January of 1987 you came back to Claremont, California. How did that change take place?

PACHON: They were conducting a national search for the Kenan Professor of Political Studies whose specialty was Latino politics, Latino studies. I

had never taught Latino politics while at Baruch, but I had written in that field. So I came out here for an interview at Pitzer and it was a good match and they offered me the job. And I think coming back to California was very appealing to me.

TURNER: And so, along with being a professor since 1987, you've also been involved with the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute--at that time it was the Tomás Rivera Center--did you know that, before you came out here, that you would be involved?

PACHON: Yes. The former president called me up and explained the organization to me, which had been in operation on campus since 1983. When I came out here he offered me two options I could either be a consultant or I could be a Board Member and help oversee the development and direction of the Center. Well, I didn't want to be a consultant, I had done things like that before and I mainly wanted to teach. So I became a board member in 1987. And then in 1993, by then I found I could teach and at the same do other work. When I came out here I said that it was on the condition that I would continue with the NALEO Fund. So I had to kind of manage these two separate parts of my career. But 1993 comes--I was still directing

the NALEO Education Fund--and frankly I was too dispersed. When the opportunity arose to head up the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute I jumped at it. The TRPI [Tomás Rivera Policy Institute] has consolidated my dual interests of being involved in a policy environment while still remaining in academia.

TURNER: So, between 1987 and 1993, when you were both here and with the Education Fund, what did your work as a Board Member for the Tomás Rivera Center involve?

PACHON: Basically, I provided direction, going to the trustee meetings, reacting to activities of the Center, your basic trustee relationship.

TURNER: About the history of TRC, how did it come to be located in Claremont? How was it founded?

PACHON: A group of college presidents led by Tomás Rivera, who was the Chancellor at [University of California, Riverside] Riverside, John Maguire from the Claremont Graduate School, [Robert] Erburu of Times Mirror Companies were the main participants. They took a look at the Latino community and saw a need for policy research in this area in Los Angeles. And Tomás Rivera was to become the founder, that was the idea that was discussed, but unfortunately he died in the

interim. I was not involved in these early stages, and the funny thing is I reviewed the proposal for the Carnegie Corporation from the Tomás Rivera Center back before I was involved with it. So, I told them that I was under the impression that it was a good idea.

TURNER: Having no idea at the time that you would later become the president?

PACHON: No, I had no idea. It was the funniest thing. But I thought it sounded like a worthy endeavor.

[End Session 3]

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Session 4, November 25, 1997]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

TURNER: When we left off last time we'd started talking about your experiences here at the Policy Institute, so I thought we'd start there. I know the Policy Institute has been involved in research in several important issues over the past few years: Latino voting patterns, affirmative action, Latino education, and technology to name a few. Which projects stand out in your mind as the most significant work of the Institute since you've been involved with it?

PACHON: The Institute had established itself prior to my arrival here as having been a real contributor in the field of educational policy research. But when I was brought on the Board of Trustees asked that we diversify the policy research agenda to include topics other than education policy. We began by returning to the strengths that myself and Dr. [Rudolfo O.] de la Garza--who is our

Vice-President for Research--have, which is political civic research. And we really sat down and we tried to conceptualize what were the areas where the Institute could add value to the policy debate. It appeared to us that there were three areas that we could be involved in. And those were: the integration of the Latino into American society, the impact that hemispheric integration as well as the transformations of the American economy are having on Latinos--and I'm talking about downsizing and the impact of information technology-- and finally, the third area, was the traditional field that the Institute had been involved in, which was education policy research.

So we started out in 1993 and that's right when the whole anti-immigrant debate was beginning. When I think back on some of the projects we are most proud of I think of trying to be a voice of reason during the Proposition 187 debate, where we were trying to point out facts: that a lot of the studies that purported to show immigrants' high utilization of welfare services were completely flawed. I think that we added a significant voice to that debate by saying, "look, some of this is just bogus insofar

as social science methodology is concerned." Let me give you an example. A front page story was carried in the L.A. Times about a study by Professor Donald Huddle at Rice University that showed that immigrants were costing the state of California eighteen billion dollars a year in welfare services. Well, his study makes the following assumptions: that immigrants don't die, that no immigrant pays taxes, that no immigrant returns. Of course, if you set up a model that shows nobody dying, nobody working, and nobody paying taxes, is it any surprise that you have a deficit at the bottom line? So we pointed out these facts and we were blasted, really, by the anti-immigrants. We were getting hate-mail there for a while, during that period of time.

A couple of other studies come to mind. We got funding to take a look at the impact of how information technology is being utilized in the Hispanic community and we were able to do some real basic research utilizing census tapes on the utilization of computers by Latinos. And we basically found that Latinos and African-Americans are about ten years behind white, non-Hispanics in society in home ownership, in

school, and in the use of computers at work. And that has led to a one million dollar grant from the Kellogg Foundation--which recognized the seminal work that we did in this area--to keep exploring the subject further.

The final thing that I would look at as a real benchmark for the Institute is our surveys of Latino public opinion, surveys of Latino political attitudes and political behavior. I think that we've shown the complexity--the heterogeneity--of Latino policy perspectives. Latinos are very conservative, for example, when it comes to welfare in that they feel that you should get a two-year limit, that there should be a cutoff, things like that. They are ambivalent about immigration flows--50 percent of Latinos feel that maybe we shouldn't have as many immigrants coming over--but they're very, very strong on immigrant rights. So what we're trying to do is to lift one of the layers of the onion off and get beyond the simple painting of the Hispanic community with one brush stroke and showing that Latino attitudes are heterogeneous. They are diverse, and you can't use one single stroke to characterize this community like so

many of the pundits do when they are talking about Latinos.

Something that we haven't followed up and that is really interesting to us is Latino attitudes toward law enforcement. Again, these attitudes are very conservative. They believe in curfews. They believe that parents should be responsible for teenagers in case they are involved in crimes. But they are very ambivalent about law enforcement agencies. In other words, they want law enforcement, but they think the present law enforcement agencies discriminate, are engaged in corrupt behavior, and things like that.

TURNER: The actual police departments?

PACHON: The police departments, yes. We did that study and were really surprised at it, and then one week later that very famous incident occurred on the freeway where a police officer was seen beating up an immigrant woman. And it was an example that highlighted what our findings were showing. But the one finding that we did come up with when it comes to Latino attitudes--which we haven't explored fully--is that California Latinos may be more similar in their policy perspectives to New York Latinos rather than

Texas Latinos, even though California and Texas are both Mexican American and New York is Puerto Rican. And Texas Latinos and Florida Latinos--who are Cuban American and others--are more similar in their public policy views than Texans and Californians are. So, rather than it being a South-West versus North-East and South-East split--which most of the national commentators, when they take a look at Latinos, try to say is the major difference--our surveys are showing that it's really a North-South split, or a bicoastal versus others split. It's New York and California Latinos--because they're heavily urbanized--looking at issues in very similar ways, and Texas and Florida Latinos taking a different perspective.

TURNER: That's interesting. There are obviously several projects here that are providing a lot of vital information on Latinos and politics. What methods does the Institute use to pursue the dissemination of this information, and other efforts to result in improved public policy? How do you get the word out?

PACHON: We have an aggressive media outreach strategy to try and reach the public media. Typically we hold a press conference and then, we don't think

that's enough, so we hold community briefings where we bring in elected officials, appointed officials, and community leaders and disseminate our findings to them in kind of a seminar format and a presentation format. And then, thirdly, we make the publications user-friendly in that we try to make our publications with an executive summary, twenty or thirty pages with a lot of graphs and a lot of user-friendly type materials so that the basic findings can be transmitted in a condensed format. We've been very successful in some particular instances. In the affirmative action debate that occurred in 1996 we did a survey of Latino public opinion a few weeks before the election and we brought together the Latino elected officials. Everyone was assuming at that time that the Latino community was going to vote in support of affirmative action and against the particular proposition. Our surveys showed that 70 percent of Latinos did not know how to vote, or had no idea of how they were going to vote on Proposition 209.

TURNER: Because of the wording?

PACHON: Because of the ambiguous wording. And the elected officials were shocked. They went from our briefing to a rally where then-Secretary of

HUD [Housing and Urban Development] Henry Cisneros was going to make a major presentation to an East-side crowd, and they shared the results. As a result, we saw a tremendous beating of the drums, as it were, saying, "look, this is the impact this proposition is going to have." Our surveys showed that three weeks before the election 70 percent of Latinos were undecided, and by the time the election came around 75 percent of the Latinos voted against it. Now, it doesn't matter to us if you are for or against affirmative action. I think what it shows is that the findings of the Institute can have impact, and they can have policy impact in very substantive ways.

TURNER: That's a good point. You mention last year's election, 1996. Presidential election years are always especially interesting, I would think, for policy research organizations because there is so much to study. What approaches did the Institute take in 1996 to study Latino voting?
Specifically, can you describe the Institute's grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts and what all that involves?

PACHON: Sure. One of the things that we've been picking up on is that since the Latino community's

infrastructure still has not been developed--insofar as equitable representation in media outlets, opinion writers, editorial writers--you have a lot of so-called experts telling us how the Latino community is going to vote on a particular issue. One of the things that we've decided to do during every election cycle is to start actually surveying the Latino community and seeing what the community thinks, rather than what someone thinks the Latino community thinks. Our approach has been to objectively survey statewide Latino political attitudes on the salient policy issues that are coming in that particular election. On Proposition 187 we surveyed what they thought of Prop. 187--which is the anti-immigrant legislation--on 209, the same thing. We will continue to do that. On the upcoming English-only initiative in schools, we will probably have a survey on that.

There has been a serious flaw in national survey efforts in regards to the Latino community. Since you're drawing national samples of 1000 people, when you sample Latinos you only get about 10 percent of the population. And if you're looking for registered voters, you get even less than 10 percent. Then, a lot of these

respondents are Spanish monolinguals or prefer Spanish, and some of the larger survey companies just aren't built to handle bilingual interviewing. So you get generalizations based on twenty-five or forty respondents. We think that's where we will be contributing.

The second part of your question, what is the Pew Charitable Trust research? As you know, Robert Putnam primarily has been putting out the proposition that there has been a decline in social capital in the United States, social capital being operationalized as the social interactions that individuals have between one another in groups. Therefore, church membership, bowling leagues, participating in fraternal organizations, all have gone down at the same time that American political participation has gone down. I was asked to comment on Mr. Putnam's thesis at the Council on Foundations meeting about two years ago in San Francisco. I found his thesis fascinating, but not at all applicable to the Latino community. If you look at operational indicators of Latino social involvement and social capital, they're very high. The general social survey--done through the University of Michigan--shows that Latinos

have higher group membership than non-Latinos. So, Putnam's thesis--even though it's intriguing and has been the subject of Camp David retreats and discussions--isn't applicable to the Latino community in a very interesting way. Take a look at church membership, take a look at soccer leagues, take a look at sense of neighborhood. Go to any East L.A. neighborhood, for example, on a Sunday and you'll see neighbors socializing with one another, you'll see all the fields filled up with soccer leagues. But, yet look at the political participation of Latinos: it's lower than white non-Hispanics. So, Mr. Putnam presented and I criticized that. It was an intriguing question and the Pew Charitable Trust program officer was in the audience at the time and he was also struck by this apparent contradiction. So they have funded us for a one year study--in conjunction with some of Mr. Putnam's work--to take a look at the community of Latinos and see if some of the social capital concepts are applicable to the Latino community. It's a fascinating study. Professor Gary Segura of Claremont Graduate University is working with us on that study.

TURNER: That sounds very interesting.

PACHON: Oh, yes. As you know, in the social capital literature there is this big debate over whether it's culture or perhaps there are institutional relationships that account for non-participation. If you take a look at Italy, for example, where Mr. Putnam did some of his work, in Southern Italy there's been low political participation. But some writers say that's because of the dominance Northern Italy had over Southern Italy, so that political participation wasn't possible because of the institutional power arrangements. It's an interesting study for us to be involved in and we're looking forward to the results of that.

TURNER: There should be a lot to find there. With the growing numbers in the Latino community, the political parties, in some ways, seem to be waking up to the importance of the Latino electorate, although in other ways they are clearly not. What conclusions would you draw about Latino voters and parties and their relationship in the late 1990s?

PACHON: I think that we are in a period of flux right now. I think the Republican party did very well with some of the wedge issues that they initiated in 1994--not the Republican party per se, because

that in itself is a stereotype of the Republican party--I'm talking about Governor [Pete] Wilson. Governor Wilson in 1994 played wedge issues very well in getting white, non-Hispanic voters to the polls. As a result, he polarized and politicized significant segments of the Latino community. Proposition 209--the anti-affirmative action proposition--also had a similar, but not as powerful, effect on the Latino community. As a result, the Latino community in the 1990s has moved away from the Republican party back towards the Democratic party. If we take a look at a ten year retrospect, we see that Ronald Reagan picked up about 45 percent of the Latino vote in the 1984 presidential election. In 1996 Bill Clinton, a Democrat, picked up about 70 percent of Latino voters and about 80 percent of newly naturalized Latino voters.

So, in 1997, as we come to the close of the decade, the Republican party is trying to make efforts to recapture the Latino vote. The Democratic party, in contrast, appears a bit complacent about its Latino inroads. One of the things that I'm looking forward to analyzing as the years come up is whether or not the Latino vote stays as heavily Democratic as it has been

at mid-decade, or whether it will start reverting back to a split electorate. When we ask Latinos, "in the future would you be willing to vote for a Republican party candidate?" thirty-five percent say, "yeah, sure, I'd vote for a Republican candidate." When you ask Latino voters, "which party does a better job of handling domestic policy issues?" fifty percent say Democrats and fifty percent say Republicans.

What I see out in the political environment is that the Democratic party is taking for granted this move back of Latinos into the party and I see that as perhaps a very temporary state. It has been proven in states like Texas where Governor George Bush, Jr. did very well amongst Latino voters. Mayor [Rudolph] Giuliani of New York City did very well amongst Puerto Rican Latino voters. Those political pundits who are claiming that there's been this massive realignment back to the Democratic party are correct in one sense. They are correct in that in the past two elections we've seen that shift back. But they may not be correct in how permanent this shift is.

TURNER: So there have been significant swings in voting patterns and these changes could continue?

PACHON: These changes could continue. It will be interesting to see, in California, for example, in 1998, whether the Ron Untz initiative of English-only in schools will have the same polarizing effect as Proposition 187 and Proposition 209 had on the California Latino electorate.

You've got to remember that the Democratic and Republican parties look at these figures as well as we do. In one year 150,000 Latinos became naturalized citizens in California. There's only a million Latinos who voted in 1996. So, if you have 150,000 new voters, that's a 15 percent increase in that electorate. To ignore that electorate is political suicide for the future, especially in statewide races.

TURNER: That's a very good point. One particular issue related to Latino voting in the 1996 election has been the [Robert] Dornan-[Loretta] Sanchez race, where Bob Dornan has really been creating a stink over losing a close election and then making accusations about illegal votes. As someone who's written extensively on, and been actively involved in, Latino politics and who's observed political mobilization, how do you view this ongoing fiasco?

[Interruption]

PACHON: Well, I think that the Dornan-Sanchez race exemplifies a couple of characteristics--a couple of trends that are going to be taking place in the state--over the next couple of years. First of all, this was a Latino political victory outside of a traditional Latino area; it was in Orange County. What this does is it highlights the fact that the Latino population has become dispersed and is suburbanizing throughout the state of California, and also, concurrently with that, is that there are new ports of entry for Latino immigrants.

Much has been said about the upset victory, but you have to remember that Dornan almost lost that election back in 1992 when he spent close to a million dollars and his opponent spent less than 25,000 dollars. It was a Latino--Banuelos--that ran and he came within three or four percentage points of beating Mr. Dornan at that time. So that when you had an articulate, young, woman who had financing--and she did have financing--Dornan was very vulnerable. Dornan also had some very negative baggage with him. First of all, Dornan is not your mainstream middle-of-the-road Republican. He was called "B-

1 Bob" because he was so concerned and consumed about national defense issues. That would have been all right by itself, but he was also very extremist in the way he characterized his opponents and the way he characterized any critics. He was very anti-gay, very anti-liberal, and he was very vehement about his attacks on either gays or liberals. We are not talking about a middle-of-the-roader, we are talking about almost an extremist insofar as political behavior is concerned.

The other negative baggage--besides being a political extremist--that Dornan had with him is that he ran for president under the Republican party in 1996 and he used up a lot of his goodwill among Republican party regulars by challenging [Robert] Bob Dole. So that had an impact on his campaign. Finally, he may have had the factor of complacency that happens to long-term incumbents. There was a major debate, for example, in his district between him and Loretta Sanchez. Sanchez shows up on time for an hour long debate, and he shows up ten minutes before the debate is over. So Sanchez has the forum for that period of time. Not only did Sanchez have some very strong attributes--financing,

articulate, young, a woman--but Dornan had some very negative characteristics.

Overlay on top of that the political party dynamic that was going on in this state. Dornan's district being vulnerable was also characterized by having a state assembly race where you had a non-incumbent, so it was a competitive election. You had a Latino running for Mayor for the city of Santa Ana. So you had three or four different races all trying to mobilize Democratic party voters. All of these circumstances come together and Loretta Sanchez wins. What's been unfortunate, of course, has been the illegal voting controversy that has ensued, specifically that non-citizens voted during that time. As you know, the L.A. Times found 46 voters that were not U.S. citizens--it was some number that they found--and Sanchez only won by 984 votes. So, any sort of margin that you chip away at could swing the election. One of the things that I see for the future is that this whole issue of non-citizen voting has the potential for being the next rights issue here in California. If some of the right wing takes it, it will serve as another polarizing incident for the Latino electorate.

TURNER: That's an interesting issue. We'll have to see what happens in the future there. On another topic, for much of this century, African-Americans have been in the national spotlight when our nation discusses ethnicity and politics, but this situation has been rapidly changing. With the rise of Latino populations and Latino political organizations, many individuals, yourself included, from both the Latino and African-American communities have pondered the impact of tensions between the two communities and what this will mean for the future. How would you assess these developments, particularly in light of the changing population of Southern California?

PACHON: This is an issue that is of concern to a lot of the leadership in the Latino community, that you will have minority versus minority in some areas, whether it be political competition or competition for public service jobs or other areas. The reality is that it's taken the United States over 150 years and we still haven't come to grips with the African-American situation. How do we deal with a biracial society? Now, when we've been trying to deal with biracial issues, you complicate the mix by throwing in a

multiethnic component, which is what Latinos represent. So if Latinos have really reached national prominence thirty years ago, and African-Americans came into prominence 140 years ago, American society still doesn't know how to handle Latinos. Some people think they're just like blacks, except maybe lighter skinned. Others say they're just like Italians and they're going to blend in. So you have all these different perceptions. But on the issue of inter-ethnic competition, that is an issue that the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute wants to explore with some of our sister organizations in the other ethnic communities. We are currently involved in a project with the Leadership Education for Asian and Pacific Islanders--LEAP--trying to look at Latino-Asian interactions, and with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, which is located in Washington, D.C., to take a look cities like Compton, Pomona, New York City, where inter-ethnic tensions have flared. There has been violence; there's violence in L.A. city schools. I've heard that there's one incident every month involving groups of more than twenty students between blacks and Latinos in Los Angeles County. This is a serious issue.

We want to try to get a handle on that issue and see where there are areas of cooperation as well as areas where we agree to disagree.

TURNER: Again, another issue that seems to be unfolding. I'm sure the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute will continue to . . .

PACHON: Oh, yes. In fact, this first meeting, we are having on January 8, 1998. We've already had one seminar where we've jointly discussed the issue in Washington, D.C. with the Joint Center for Political Studies, where we've brought together black scholars and Latino scholars to talk about the dimensions of the conflict as well as the dimensions of cooperation that exist between the two groups.

TURNER: In January of this year, President Clinton appointed you to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. How did that appointment come about and what has been your experience on the Commission thus far?

PACHON: There's been a tradition at the national level to appoint commissions to look at crises or to look at potential problem areas in American society. The President's Advisory Commission on Excellence in Education for Hispanic Americans is taking a

look at, perhaps, one of the more serious crises that has not yet been fully highlighted. That is, this fantastic problem that we're having with secondary and college level education for Latinos. We're having a 30 percent dropout rate in the Latino community.

TURNER: In high school?

PACHON: In high school, yes, a 30 percent high school dropout rate. College enrollment rates are correspondingly lower. Only 4 percent of the admittants into the University of California and the University of Texas are Latino, in states where 25 percent of the population is Latino. The Commission is trying to look at how the federal government can react to this. I've only been to one Commission meeting so far, that was in September. I find the Commission's work to be very valuable. They are going to be holding hearings, for example, out here in California, on whether or not bilingual education has a positive impact. The Commission can serve a purpose by highlighting issues, by bringing knowledge to the forefront on issues that impact education. Having been only there for one meeting, I can't tell you much more than that.

TURNER: I'm sure that that will lead to even more exciting things in the future; there's a lot of good work there. As a final question, what are your plans for the future?

PACHON: One of the things--when I came on as president of the TRPI--was to stabilize the financial resources for the Institute. In a period of four years since I first came on--we had nineteen corporations and foundations supporting the Institute when I first joined--now we have forty-seven. So we've more than doubled the amount of financial and corporate support. Our asset base has grown from 500,000 to 2.7 million dollars in four years. I think that one of the things that I see for the future is continuing to secure the resources so that the Institute can serve its primary objective of being a non-partisan, objective voice on Latino issues.

But as we get involved in these studies, one of the things we're finding is that Latino issues are really American issues that deal with low-income communities. So, a lot of our projects for the future--including the ones on information technology--will be taking a look at what impacts low-income communities so that equal educational education is foreshortened or is impacted

negatively. I see us getting involved in some really exciting projects that take a look at issues that impact all Americans, but Americans particularly at the lower end of the income structure, where Latinos unfortunately still predominate.

[End Session 4]

[End Tape 3, Side A]

INDEX OF NAMES